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Subject: Statewide Transportation Improvements Program

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To: DOT_STIP@dot.state.ak.us

To: Statewide Planning Office -Division of Program Development

For the last 25 years, I have been an Alaska resident. For the last 17 years, I have lived in Sitka, most of that time in our home off of Sawmill Creek (SMC) Road. I am extremely disappointed that you are considering delaying the SMC Road upgrade.

Sawmill Creek Road is one of the major roads in our community. It is an access route for residents to travel to work and for pleasure, for employees traveling to work at the old mill site and the hatchery, and for tourists seeking wilderness and visitor facilities (ie, Whale Park, the chocolate factory, ...). It will have even more traffic on it if the new multipurpose dock is built at the old mill site.

For many years, SMC Road has deteriorated due to this large use and environmental conditions. It was in urgent need of reconstruction. This fall, we were very happy to have Phase I completed to our turn-off, Shotgun Alley. The wider car lanes, wider bike lanes, and pedestrian path have made this a much safer place to walk and bicycle for adults and small children.

We are looking forward to the next phases, both the reconstruction of Indian River bridge and the extension to Whale Park. The bridge is in terrible condition and is too narrow for traffic. The bike/pedestrian walkway needs replacing. And the extension to Whale park will provide drivers, bikiers, and pedestrians with the same safe road that was provided in Phase I.

We were extremely disappointed to hear that several large projects with questionable value were going to receive funding instead of the one project central to Sitka's continued development and the safety of its citizens. Please reconsider where these funds are spent - it is more important to spend them on critical improvements to our existing transportation network before using them to construct controversial roads and bridges.

Thank you.

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